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Iraq MH1

[For information on the topography, climate, agriculture and commercial crops, irrigation, stock raising, natural resources, production and supply, waterways, railways and roads of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates between the plateau of Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf discussed as one geographical unit rather than by political boundary, see M1 Middle East, Cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 340-370.]

[For information on the topography, occupations and relative productivity of the desert plateau, and of the Arabian Peninsula as a whole, see M1 Middle East, cat. 116, 21: Fisher, pp. 427-449.]

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

the Persian residents in 'Iraq. These were scarcely found north of the Jabal Ḥamrin, and in southern 'Iraq were confined to a few households. Their great concentrations were in Karbalā, Kadhimiya, Samarrā, and Najf, the four Holy Cities of the Shi'a (to which all Persians adhere), and in Baghdad. Bilingual in Persian and Arabic, and found in every class from landowner to beggar, from pious Mujtahid to huckster, the Persians were exclusively town-dwelling and formed an alien community the more unmanageable because the Shi'i devotion which had led them to 'Iraq was itself among the greatest embarrassments of a Sunni empire. With the Lurs, the Persians of the Holy Cities and Baghdad had little save official nationality in common. These hardy natives of the southern Zagros, and subjects of their hereditary Wali, were familiar in Baghdad and Baṣra as porters of heavy loads, which occupation they monopolized. They were resident also as traders and craftsmen in the middle-Tigris and Gharraf regions, known there as Fayliya Kurds; and they dominated the border towns of Mandali and Badra and the villages near by. Of all this the last half-century has changed nothing; and the same is true of the gentle, mysterious, scanty race of the Ṣubbā or Sabaeans or, as they call themselves, Mandaeans. Known to travellers mistakenly as 'Christians of John the Baptist', these folk, with their own Syriac-type language and their holy books in Mandaean tongue and script, lived as silversmiths and boat-builders in the riverain towns and villages of lower 'Iraq, wherever running water was available for their rites. Their origins and beliefs, neither Muslim nor Christian, and their distinctive ceremonies and customs had in 1900 been little studied.

The 'Iraqi Jews were in 1900 one of the chief minorities in the territory. Like the main Christian sects they formed an authorized Millet of the Empire, with autonomy in their personal and community affairs. They were grouped in larger or smaller numbers in almost every urban or greater village settlement from the Van border to the farthest south. Everywhere industrious and inoffensive, they contained also, especially in Mosul and the north, the poorest and most backward elements. Exempt from military service and with little part in public life, they practised the occupations and showed the qualities of their race and administered their schools and synagogues; and many a one could be found, in the wildest Kurdish areas, as the valuable personal agent to the Aghā, who would boast of his clever Jew. In Baghdad, with a city community of some 50,000, they almost outnumbered the Sunni Arabs and exceeded the Christian, Persian, and Turkish minorities combined. With their agents in Manchester, Bombay, and Paris they had so far the supremacy in commerce and foreign trade that Mus-

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

lims were often forced into partnership, while Christian merchants had been largely driven from the field. Western education was widespread, inspired by the excellent school of the French-Jewish progressive Alliance Israélite Universelle founded in 1864. The community, which included rich landowners and 'notables', was treated with a tolerance which excluded social equality: the abilities and wealth of the successful excited jealousy and at times a bullying avarice, but never political suspicion. The ruin of their position and happiness by political Zionism lay still half a century ahead.

The Christian communities of the three wilayas differed little from those of our own day. The more populous sects belonged to official Millets headed locally by bishop, archbishop, or patriarch. Such were the Orthodox (Gregorian) Armenians, fairly numerous in the towns but nowhere concentrated: the Assyrians or Nestorians, few in the 'Iraq of 1900 and almost confined to the 'Amadiya qadhā in the extreme north: the Monophysite Jacobites with a few houses in Mosul, and the Syrian Catholics, who are Jacobites catholicized: the Armenian Catholics: small communities of Greek Orthodox and smaller of mission-converted Protestants: and finally the numerous and important Chaldaeans, who, by origin Nestorians, had been attracted from their mountains to Mosul and its villages and catholicized to form a Uniate Church. The Christians, whose prized distinctions of creed and prelate were meaningless to Turk and Arab, enjoyed a status above Jew or Yazidi but below Muslim. Poorer than the Jews, they were less resented and like them politically negligible. The suspicion which Armenian nationalism had evoked elsewhere in Turkey, to meet brutal and bloody reprisals in the Armenian massacres, was not felt in 'Iraq. The Christians owned land, cultivated in their northern villages but not in lower 'Iraq, specialized in retail commerce, hotel-keeping, artisanship, and the legal profession, and provided a number of government functionaries. The Chaldaeans of Tall Kayf had long enjoyed a monopoly of employment on the river steamers. All the communities had their own churches, priesthoods, and usually schools, served for long years past by the missions of European churches. The educational standard was advanced by 'Iraqi standards of the time, and a beginning had been made with girls' schools. The Christians like the Jews were free from military service, and paid the exemption tax. The communities of both religions sent official members to the Administrative Councils of their district.

The Turks themselves, last of the minorities to be mentioned, were represented in 'Iraq by a few dozen senior officials, by families whose property or politics constrained them to live there, by the Turkish womenfolk of upper-class urban families, and by

4z Wilson G-8 (no date) 1937 MH1 Iraq MH1
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readmission afterwards, and also members of other Christian sects belonging to the recognized tribes of Hakkari who accompanied their Nestorian brethren in the War exodus to 'Iraq via Persia. Since the Turks refused to readmit these people and Great Britain, when peace terms were concluded with Turkey, was not in a position to insist, it was necessary to try and find lands for them within the borders of the 'Iraq state. The Assyrians wished to be settled as a homogeneous unit, but this was impossible as it would have meant displacing a large number of Kurds. Many of the Assyrians were settled on such lands as were available, but in 1933 serious trouble broke out between some of these settlers and the 'Iraq Government, and incidents occurred which made it impossible for at any rate all the Assyrians to remain in 'Iraq. Various schemes were examined, including settlement in Brazil, British Guiana and on the Orontes in Syria. None of these, however, proved practicable, and the matter is still in the hands of the Council of the League of Nations. In the meantime 6,000 Assyrians have been settled temporarily on the River Khabur in eastern Syria, and the remainder, numbering some 20,000, are still in 'Iraq. Those in Syria include several complete tribes. The condition of those in 'Iraq may be said to be satisfactory at present and they possess very large numbers of animals of all kinds. Many are also employed as mechanics, clerks, etc., by the big oil companies and in the 'Iraq railways and police. All these possess 'Iraqi nationality. A certain number are also employed as aerodrome guards by the British Royal Air Force, duties which are shared by them with Arabs and Kurds. The Assyrians are a brave, hardy race, though obstinate as isolated, uneducated mountaineers are liable to be. It is indeed a tragedy that they should have been caught up in the wheel of events and severely mangled in the process.

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The Yezidis

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The Yezidis are usually known as "devil-worshippers." This is, however, a misnomer. "Devil-propitiators" would be more correct. They believe that Satan, whom they call Mālik Tāūs or the Peacock Angel, was exiled from Heaven for a definite period and is, after the lapse of a few thousand years, to be restored to high favour. It is incumbent on them therefore to keep on the right side of him, so that he may then use his influence on their behalf. It is extremely difficult to investigate the Yezidi religion. The priests teach that education, save for their caste, is forbidden by the "Black Books," the Yezidi

4a Wilson G-3 (no date) 1937 MHI Iraq MHI

DISCUSSION

Mrs. SOANE-ELLIS: Might I ask if the lecturer has any information as to the whereabouts of Sheikh Mahmud? The last time I saw him he was a prisoner at Ramadi. 000

Major WILSON: I cannot say whether he is exactly a prisoner now, but he certainly would not be allowed to go back to Sulaimaniyyeh.

Brigadier J. G. BROWNE: May I ask what is the position of the Pizhder Kurds under the present Government? 657 563

Major WILSON: There has been a slight extension of police control, but, as far as I know, real administration has not yet been established over the Pizhder.

The CHAIRMAN: It remains, I think, only for me to sum up what we have learnt. We see here again the extraordinary importance of the question of roads in establishing the authority of the Government among mountain peoples. We are building roads on the North-West Frontier of India. And here we have seen the roads that are being built through Kurdistan, like Mr. Hamilton's very fine achievement, the making of the road through the Rowanduz Gorge. I believe the account of the building of that road is going to be published shortly, and it should make a book well worth reading. 653 657

We have seen some extraordinarily interesting slides. And we have learnt some valuable information about the present position of the Assyrians. From what the lecturer says, the best plan now would appear to be rather to leave them alone where they are. The other plan was to have been to move them to an extremely suitable site on the Orontes River. But unfortunately the lands chosen had been sequestrated from their original owner, who had been in trouble. When M. Blum came into office, he decided he could deal with this case, reinstated the man in question, and restored his lands. So that scheme necessarily came to nothing, and it is quite impossible on other grounds now for the Assyrians to go there. But one gathers that it is wisest not to agitate on their behalf, nor to stir them up, for that only makes them very unpopular in the country. They are finding employment to some extent in the oil-fields, and as guards and station masters on the railways and in similar employment, and one can hope things may settle down and that they will stay in their own country. 186 463

We must thank our lecturer, not only for the good work he has obviously done in 'Iraq, but also for the excellent and informative lecture he has given us this evening. 000

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654 Finally, the Development Board should, as far as possible, enlist the aid and cooperation of other government ministries and 647 agencies and of the provincial and municipal administrations in the task of planning and carrying out a development program. It should actively encourage them to submit suggestions and plans for development, integrate these plans with each other and the Board's own, and, to the maximum extent feasible, allocate money and responsibility for the execution of these plans and projects to other agencies. The establishment of a Community Planning Office and a Housing Authority, as proposed earlier by the Mission, would be in line with this suggestion.

In the last analysis the Development Board would, of course, retain the final responsibility for formulating the overall program, for coordinating those projects such as irrigation which concern many government departments, and for allocating the funds necessary to finance the various parts of the program. In order to enable the Board to carry out this overall coordinating and planning function, it is essential that all major development projects be brought within its purview, even though its financial assistance may not in all instances be necessary. At present, projects for a government petroleum refinery, a government textile mill and a new grain silo are all being kept outside of the Board's jurisdiction. The formulation of an integrated program with a well-conceived system of priorities is difficult as long as this remains the practice. In addition, coordination would be facilitated if the Board, of which only the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance are ex officio members, were to give the Ministers of Economics, Agriculture (a new Ministry proposed by the Mission), Public Works and Social Affairs facilities for attending Board sessions whenever matters of interest to them are being discussed. The possibility of making the Governor of the National Bank also an ex officio member of the Board might be considered.

Technical Assistance

654 A substantial increase in the technical staff available to the 463 government will also be of critical importance to the success of the development program. No project should be approved under the program until evidence is submitted that it is technically sound in

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its conception and that technical skills are available to carry it to successful completion. It will not be possible actually to spend the mounting revenues available for development unless, in the period immediately ahead, the Development Board insures that the government is equipped with a staff capable of undertaking the detailed technical preparatory work required by numerous projects.

At present the government service is admittedly deficient in technical talent. In the long run this deficiency can only be overcome by training Iraqis, but in the short run it must be met by the employment of foreign experts for periods of varying duration.

For major projects it will be possible and usually necessary to enlist the assistance of foreign consulting engineering firms and foreign contractors. In general, such projects will be of two types. Most industrial projects will represent one type. Here it will be necessary to formulate basic specifications such as plant capacity, quality of products and production costs, but the plants involved will be based on standardized processes so that bids can be invited directly from manufacturers or contractors on an erected basis with all of the necessary engineering work to be done by the contractor. The contract in a case of this type would specify the details of the equipment to be furnished and would make definite guarantees as to quality of products and production costs. The second type of project involves those for which standardized designs are not available, and where a large amount of civil works is involved. In such cases the preliminary engineering work should be done, before inviting bids on construction, by qualified consulting engineers who will not bid on the construction work. In general it would be desirable to have the firm chosen to make the preliminary studies also prepare the specifications and conditions upon which bids will be invited, as well as select the qualified bidders, analyze the bids received, and later supervise the contractor.

For the large number of smaller projects, however, individual technicians will be needed to assist both in the planning and the implementation. In connection with its recommendations in the various fields of development, the Mission has indicated more specifically the kind and scope of technical assistance required. The government has already made many applications for technical assistance to agencies of the United Nations, and to the United

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Kingdom and the United States, but it is important that the government devise some means for coordinating such requests in the future so that priority will be given to those which will be most helpful to development. Competent foreign technicians are not unlimited in supply and the accommodations and facilities which such experts will require in Iraq are likewise restricted.

In some cases foreign experts will be required only for short periods to make surveys of particular problems or to look into the technical aspects of particular projects. In many other cases, however, technical assistance will be needed over longer periods to carry out specific programs. Qualities of patience and persistence as well as technical competence will be required of foreign experts engaged for such tasks. Frequently it will be desirable to give such experts positions of executive and administrative responsibility in order to insure that the job will be done within the allotted time. Appointments of this character need not be regarded as impairing national sovereignty, since the foreign expert will be carrying out programs approved by the government and arrangements can be made to provide each expert with an Iraqi deputy who would be trained to take his place as rapidly as feasible.

In addition to its recommendations for technical assistance in particular fields, the Mission suggests that a small corps of competent engineers be attached to the Development Board under conditions which would insure more or less autonomous administration. Such a group, which would have to be recruited primarily abroad and necessarily be highly paid, would operate as a pool of technicians who would be available for examining the technical soundness and preparation of projects originating both with the Board and with other government departments. A pool of this character would economize on the number of engineers needed throughout the government. It would also be equipped to find and help recruit foreign experts needed for short-term assignments and to check on the work done by contracting firms. Finally, by operating as a more or less autonomous group under the Development Board, it would relieve the Board of technical details and enable it to devote its attention to overall planning with the confidence that projects coming before it for final approval were technically sound.

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The technical advice thus available to the Board would usefully be complemented by an economic adviser to whom reference will be made later.

Skilled Labor

Other difficulties may well emerge in the supply of foremen, skilled and semi-skilled workers. Even now it seems to be difficult to find certain kinds of skilled workers in Iraq, and consequently they are able to command high wages compared with unskilled labor. If acute shortages are not to develop later on, it will be necessary for the Development Board to determine promptly what types of skills are likely to be in greatest demand as a result of the development program and to inquire how appropriate training can be instituted. So far as requirements for major public works are concerned, the Board will, no doubt, be able to obtain useful advice from local and foreign contracting firms with experience in Iraq. Information on requirements for other projects may be obtained from the appropriate organizations such as the railways and the Industrial Bank. Once even a rough idea of the requirements has been ascertained, the extent and quality of the available supply and the methods of training the necessary additional workers should be discussed with the Directorate of Labor, the Ministry of Education and such organizations as could be expected to cooperate in programs of training.

The Mission would not wish to suggest that this kind of manpower budgeting is an infallible way of solving all shortages. It is, however, well known that other countries, which are developing much more slowly than Iraq is likely to do within the next few years, have run up against shortages of skilled labor that might have been avoided with foresight and preparation. The Mission feels that there is sufficient evidence to show that the potential quality of Iraqi labor will not prove an obstacle. On a number of occasions the Mission members saw considerable mechanical ingenuity displayed by men with little training and inadequate tools; and these observations were confirmed by those with experience in Iraq. It would do less than justice to the Iraqi worker if the development of his innate skills were not encouraged in the directions where they are likely to be most urgently needed.

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162 women. The census returns, in fact, record an extraordinarily large excess of women over men in some parts of the country—e.g., 57 percent in the three rural *qadhas* of Muntafiq province—but there is good reason to believe that such figures, while indicative of the true position, are generally exaggerated.

Occupation

162 The major occupation is agriculture and animal husbandry.
463 Nearly two thirds of the people live in the rural villages. As handicrafts are rarely found in the villages and only a few people are absorbed by such secondary occupations as trade and transport, it is likely that 85 to 90 percent of the rural population lives directly off the land.

Many of the inhabitants of the smaller and even some of the larger towns are also engaged in agriculture. In Tel Afar, a town of 20,000 in the principal grain-growing region of Mosul province, over three quarters of the male population whose occupation was recorded gave it as agriculture. This, however, is probably exceptional and the proportion would, no doubt, be considerably less than half in many smaller towns. Even in the largest cities, there is a smaller but far from negligible proportion of the population employed in agriculture, principally in the production of vegetables, dates and other fruits or in raising livestock for the city market.

In all, the number of people in families whose income is derived directly from work on the land is probably in the neighborhood of 60 percent of the total population. This method of expressing the percentage is used advisedly. A much higher figure could certainly be given for the number of people occupied since most [464] of the rural population is employed to some extent. Unemployment, as opposed to underemployment, is largely an urban problem. In the rural areas the number of men whose occupation was recorded by the census is often nearly as large as the number over [859 887] 10 years of age. This, no doubt, corresponds closely to the facts, since even young children tend flocks and perform other light work on the land while old men help with such tasks as threshing. [462] Women, too, are an important source of agricultural labor, particularly at harvest time, although this is inadequately reflected in the census.

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

In the towns, on the other hand, the occupations of a much smaller proportion of the males were recorded. And, moreover, many of those that were recorded fell into various ill-defined categories, which very probably include a large number of the unemployed or the unproductive (e.g., school children). There is, also, far less opportunity for work by women in the towns.

The estimate of 60 percent for the agricultural population would leave rather less than two million people in the families of those employed in other occupations. In this sector the labor force may be estimated at about 400,000 to 450,000 men and some 30,000 women or about 450,000 in all, with a considerable margin of error on either side. Some idea of the distribution of these workers is given in the following table.

TABLE 1

NONAGRICULTURAL LABOR FORCE
(in thousands)

Commerce	110
Personal and public service	70
Manufacturing and handicraft	75
Transport	45
Government (including police)	55
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Other categories; errors and omissions	95
	450

This table, which is necessarily a compound of industrial and occupational classifications and consequently contains a few duplications, must be interpreted as only a rough estimate giving broad orders of magnitude.

After agriculture, commerce is certainly the most important occupational group; the census records nearly 50,000 (including a few women) in the four largest cities alone. There is probably at least an equal number in the rest of the country, since one of the main functions of the smaller towns is to serve as centers of retail

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trade for the surrounding countryside and as collection centers for its produce. Even in the smallest towns rows of small shopkeepers' booths can be seen and the larger towns usually have extensive bazaars.

Private and public service is another important group of occupations. Besides domestic service it includes such occupations as laundering and catering, the latter a not unimportant category in a country where the coffee-house is a center of social activity. In the four provinces for which data is available, there were 45,000 (of which 6,000 were women) in this group. The estimate given above does not seem excessive for the country as a whole.

A more detailed classification of workers employed in manufacturing will be found in Table 7. This table is based largely on statistics of workers employed in factories which have been compiled by the Labor Directorate from returns by factory inspectors. These figures are, however, acknowledged to be incomplete, particularly as regards the large numbers of handicraft workers who are self-employed with one or two assistants. From the census data it is evident that there are a large number of additional workers occupied in woodworking and allied occupations (e.g., working with palm leaves or reeds) and in tailoring or dressmaking; some addition would also have to be made for jewelry and textile workers. The figure of 75,000 given here includes an estimate for these additions.

The estimate for transportation, which includes all employees of the railways and the Port of Basra, is a particularly rough one. It is believed, however, to be of the right order of magnitude. The figure for government workers is reasonably accurate, although it may duplicate to some extent workers in other categories already specified. The residual figure, of course, is subject to an extremely wide margin of error. It includes all categories not mentioned elsewhere such as construction workers and the professions insofar as they are not employed by the government.

Literacy

The acquisition of skill is severely limited by lack of education. Education is, as the monograph on that subject shows, broader than the mere ability to read and write, but the degree of

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

Technical Education

If industrial growth is to be accelerated, it is essential that measures be taken to provide industry with skilled labor. The Industrial School at Baghdad was established to meet this need. The curriculum of the school, however, lays too little emphasis on practical training and the graduates show a disinclination to work with their hands or to take secondary positions. It would be far better to rely on apprenticeship systems for basic practical training and to use the school primarily for supplementary instruction of a somewhat broader character which might be needed by the more highly skilled workmen and foremen. Those trained in the shop or on the site would then be recruited from the ranks of the laboring class which is accustomed to manual work.

Apprenticeship systems have worked well for the Iraq Petroleum Company, for the national railways and the Basra Port Administration, all of whom have highly skilled workers trained in their own shops. Each of these organizations possesses large machine shops which could be used to train many more workers than at present. The Mission suggests that the government, through the agency of the Industrial School, enlist their cooperation in enlarging their programs to train workers for industry generally.

Commercial and business education is also important. Banking, commercial and industrial firms, as well as the government, are all handicapped by the shortage of competent typists, stenographers, bookkeepers, clerks and accountants. In industry the training of good cost accountants, capable of checking the efficiency of various types of operation, is especially vital. A single secondary commercial school, supplemented by a night school, and a higher College of Commerce and Economics have been established to meet the need for business training. The first appears to be functioning along sound lines, although it suffers from inadequate quarters and a limited teaching staff. As soon as competent teachers can be trained or recruited, secondary commercial schools should be opened in the other principal cities, particularly Basra and Mosul. The College, on the other hand, leaves much to be desired from the standpoint of both the curriculum and the standard of instruction. It apparently produces neither competent and practical bookkeepers and accountants, nor people well grounded

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

463 874 in economics and finance capable of acting as company secretaries or as economic and financial experts in business or government. Greater emphasis should be placed on practical training; the teaching staff should be strengthened; and more attention should be paid to banking and accounting, particularly cost accounting. Advisory committees consisting of representatives of leading banks and business houses should be appointed to both the College and the secondary school to review the curriculum. They could assist in arranging for part-time apprenticeship training and would provide a means for checking how well graduates of these institutions measure up to the requirements of business.

Effective Government Organization for Industry

647 654 Government activities relating to industry, except for the Industrial Bank, are now handled by a Department of Industry in the Ministry of Economics. This Department under its present director concentrates primarily on research and laboratory work and is not equipped to analyze and record the commercial and economic operations of industry. As industry expands both types of activity will become increasingly important. The Mission therefore recommends a realignment of the present organization to provide for two separate departments within the Ministry, a Department of Industrial Research and Standards and a Department of Industries. Research and technical functions now being carried on would be continued under the Department of Industrial Research and Standards. Its facilities need, however, to be expanded to meet industry's growing requirements for laboratory testing and quality control.

The newly organized Department of Industries would carry on economic research and analysis. Among its functions would be the maintenance of adequate statistical records of industrial production, the analysis of economic problems relating to industry such as marketing, and the administration of the laws providing special protection to industry.

Both departments should gradually be equipped to give increasing assistance to industry in improving its output and reducing its cost of production. This type of assistance should be stressed more and more in the future, as compared to special mea-

8:Campbell T-5 (no date) 1949 MH1 Iraq MH1

Shia tribes sent less and less of their men to rally to the Muntafiq standard, and the tribal cavalry consisted of paid retainers of the ruling house. There were, it is true, occasional differences between the Saaduns and the Turks, as when the powerful Saadun Pasha was at loggerheads with the Wali of Basra.

The Confederation is a thing of the past, and its Shia tribesmen now owe loyalty only to their own tribal sheikhs, and above them to the Government of Iraq. It is touching to find in some remote reed hut carefully tended pictures of King Feisal and of His Royal Highness the Regent. The tribes had their greatest glory in the days when the country was under foreign domination, when they were the rallying-points of the resistance which prevented the absorption of Iraq into either Turkey or Persia. In a democratic state the position of the tribes is less clear. There is much that is fine in tribal life and worth preserving at all costs, and a tribal loyalty need not necessarily interfere with modern progress. For example, numbers of tribesmen from all over Iraq now live in the capital, working in various jobs, as artisans and labourers, lawyers, doctors and engineers. In this growing State a boy may be born in a tribal reed hut, and if intelligent finish up as a doctor in Baghdad. All these emigrants from the tribes maintain close contact with their tribes, usually by way of entertaining tribesmen on their visits to the city. When a sheikh makes a levy, for some purpose, of a dirhem from the head of every family in his tribe, the emigrants are the first to send in their money: though they may be wealthy doctors driving American saloon cars, they send in the exact dirhem along with the labourers and artisans. To send more would savour of ostentation.

Life in the tribes is changing year by year. The pumping

3:Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
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(c) *Jews*

Until recently Iraq contained a large community of Jews whose families had been settled in the country for hundreds or even thousands of years. They lived mostly in the large towns, especially Baghdad, in whose economic life they played an important part as merchants, financiers, manufacturers, and members of the professions. There were also Kurdish-speaking Jews in the north, mostly urban traders and craftsmen but also rural cultivators. A law of 1931 gave Jewish communities self-government in their own affairs, and there was a highly organized communal life, with schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions. In consequence of events in Palestine the majority of Jews left Iraq in 1950–1, mostly for Israel.

(d) *Yazidis*

These are vulgarly known as 'devil-worshippers' but, although their religion includes the propitiation of Satan, it might more justly be described as an amalgam of Christian, Muslim, and Magian elements. They are divided between Jebel Sinjar and the Shaikhan district north of Mosul, speak a Kurdish dialect, except in their rites, where Arabic is used, and are probably of Kurdish origin.

(e) *Sabians*

('Baptists'), also called the Mandaeans and the 'Christians of St John'; their religion combines elements of various origins and periods. Most of them are craftsmen—especially silversmiths—in the large towns.

(f) *Shabak*

Of Kurdish origin, who live in the area of the Yazidis and are not clearly distinguished from them; their religion contains Yazidi and extreme Shii elements.

(g) *Other Sects*

Include Bahais, Sarlis, Kakais, Qizilbashis, none of them of any political significance.

Political History

Written history began in Iraq at the end of the fourth millennium B.C., but archaeological remains from much earlier periods, first in the north and later also in the south, give evidence of palaeolithic man, of agricultural neolithic man and, from the sixth and fifth millennia, of increasing human progress expressed successively in extensive agriculture, copper

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq Mtl

[Marsh Arabs]

The local governor is an efficient and more or less benevo-
511 lent man and seemed to be very well liked. The group as a whole enjoys a degree of prosperity and comfort most unusual for an Arab community. Everybody has enough to eat and enough to wear and a good house to live in. Crops seem to be quite reliable. If the wheat and barley harvest fails, the rice does not. Taxes are light and the local government good.

565 The most conspicuous difference from the typical agri-
463 cultural community in Arabia lies in the fact that here the old equality of the desert is preserved. There is no class of rich citizens who outshine their fellows. There are a few merchants of a small sort. Amara, the nearest city, is so close to the town we visited that the shops were very small, most of the trading being done in the larger city. We saw few artisans. The community seemed to be free from caste divisions and to enjoy a spirit of equality and brotherhood much like that of the Bedouins themselves.

562 Another surprising thing is the freedom of all classes. The women have discarded the veil completely and associate with the men freely, being seen on the street apparently under no restraint whatever. This is a refreshing contrast to the other communities of Arabs; indeed the Marsh Arabs are far ahead of even the Bedouins in this respect. These women buy and sell in the bazaar and appear to participate in all the activities of the town with no hesitation whatever. They visited the temporary dispensary that we set up and in their self-assertion were
795 sometimes harder to manage than the men. It is interesting to note that these Arabs are all Shiahs. "No," said the guard that accompanied us from Ahwaz as we were coming in for a visit, "there are no infidels in all this district. Every one is a Shiah."

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1
Iraq Bedouin MH8

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or bridle, except as these appurtenances are put on for show, and it is a beautiful sight to see an Arab on his pet mare galloping over the plain, the two appearing almost as one animal.

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Among these nomads much the same ideas of equality and brotherhood prevail as are seen in Central Arabia. Tribal loyalty is very strong, and no one would think of stealing from a brother tribesman. From another tribe, however, there is a continual effort to steal all the hoofed property that can be abstracted. Conceptions of property are the same sort of semi-communistic ideas that seem to characterize the Bedouin everywhere. The game of compulsory exchange goes on merrily and is the spice of life to those hardy desert rangers. Whatever government eventually prevails may expect to have a hard time in taming them and teaching them some sort of civilized respect for the property of other people.

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In marked contrast to the more or less primitive existence of these Mesopotamian nomads is the life of the large cities. Indeed Baghdad, Mosul and Basra, the principal cities of Mesopotamia, are more or less similar to cities in America in their organization and in the different classes of people they contain. The merchant class, which is large and prosperous, includes petty shopkeepers and great merchants with every gradation between these two extremes. The bazaars show a bewildering profusion of goods, in part locally manufactured and in part imported. The great bazaar in Baghdad has entire streets devoted to the sale of the peculiar red shoe that is characteristic of that city. Whole streets again have little or nothing except earthenware of every sort and description. Great rooms are piled to the ceiling with these utensils. In a general way

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH

463 each kind of goods has its special section of the bazaar.
565 The brass- and copper-smiths' quarter rings like a small
441 boiler factory all day long. The artisans who are engaged in producing these commodities form a considerable section of the Mesopotamian city population and are fairly prosperous and contented, much more so than the date gardeners of the outside districts. Supreme over them all stands the Mesopotamian silver worker, whose antimony silver work can scarcely be duplicated anywhere in the world.

463 The professional classes in these Mesopotamian cities
871 are fairly well developed. There are teachers of every
794 sort. Some of them have been trained abroad, but many
177 are indigenous and a very great credit to the schools that have turned them out. There are a number of government schools, and in addition the different religious sects maintain schools of their own. In these days when western education is in great demand, the schools of the Jews and the Christians are patronized by an increasing number of Mohammedans. No local medical profession nas
463 been developed as yet, but the wealth and the culture of
759 Mosul, Baghdad and Basra have attracted a considerable number of trained physicians from outside. We have therefore the beginnings of a medical profession, and although it is not yet indigenous, it will soon become so. Its ethics are not of a very high order; the campaign of the American College of Surgeons to abolish fee-splitting would not make much headway among Mesopotamian doctors, but time will develop ethical standards, and at the worst the profession is a long way in advance
463 of the quacks that infest Arabia proper. There is also a
693 well-established group of lawyers. One of the results of the governing of the country for hundreds of years by

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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463 698 the Turks, a foreign Power, was the development of an elaborate judicial procedure and a vast deal of red tape in all government business. It is not possible to see that the consequent appearance of a legal profession has brought any great blessings in its train.

565 These various professional groups, together with the prosperous merchants, have gradually come to constitute a leisured middle class somewhat similar to that in America. This development is confined to the three large cities, Mosul, Baghdad and Basra, with Amara as a possible addition to the list. In these cities the rich merchants and land-owners have fortunes comparable with small fortunes in America. They have accounts in New York, in Manchester and in the Continental centers, and import goods direct from all of these places. Many of them read French or English. They take newspapers and keep in touch with the life of the world. This class of merchants and land-owners is the most civilized of any Arab community to be found anywhere. Many of them have traveled in India and Syria, and no small number have even visited Europe. Some of the doctors and lawyers have studied in Paris and Berlin and Vienna. There is a considerable amount of real culture among these men and women even now, and the next generation promises to show far more.

000 These three large cities are by far the most advanced section of Mesopotamia. They appear to have in them a large degree of modern civilization. Nevertheless, even in these cities there is more tinsel than real gold. One questions in pessimistic moments whether there is anything except tinsel, in spite of all that has been done to give Mesopotamia a good government, general education and modern improvements. As far as population is con-

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
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with, but even the admittedly great difficulties of her task do not excuse her utter failure. Although she has had hundreds of years of opportunity to exert her abilities in harmonizing the different races which make up her population, they are now more discordant than ever, and we had during the war the hideous spectacle of the dominant race deliberately attempting to exterminate one of the insubordinate subject races in cold blood, certainly a sufficient confession of failure.

The Sabaeans or fire-worshippers of Mesopotamia furnish a notable example of Turkish ineptitude in facing this difficult problem of assimilating alien races. The Sabaeans are the remnants of the pre-Islamic population of Mesopotamia who refused to become Moslems in the days of the Moslem conquest. They have been, and so far as their diminished numbers permit they still are, a most valuable asset to the country. They are by far the best artisans in the Arab world. Some of their silver work surpasses the best that India can offer. This community, which is absolutely peaceable and knows nothing of the arts of war, has been harried and persecuted until now there remains only the smallest fraction of their original numbers. They now number less than ten thousand, if their own estimates can be trusted, and their complete disappearance is apparently a matter of only a short time.

Another indictment that must be brought against the Turk in the Arab world is the fact that he failed utterly as a civilizing force. This was his fault and not simply his misfortune, as might be argued of an Arab ruler who has never seen the vision of the government as a force working to uplift society. In Hasa sanitation was not improved even in the most elementary way. No

21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East
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Only three cities, Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra, have a total population exceeding 100,000. *Baghdad* (population 1943, 300,000) lies on the Tigris at the head of navigation of the river, and in the 'waist' of the lowlands, where the Tigris and Euphrates approach closely to each other, and hence give the best possibility of constructing irrigation canals. This narrow inter-riverine zone also provides a convenient crossing-place, since the marshland is reduced in extent and the firmer platform of steppeland provides a useful east-west route between the Mediterranean and Iran. The region of Baghdad thus has an important nodal position at the junction of routes from east and west across the desert, and from north, north-east, and south along the river valleys. It should be noted that all the factors mentioned above apply to a region and not to an actual site.

It is easy to see why a town should have grown up within the district of Baghdad, but the extra smaller scale features that usually fix the site of a town in one particular spot are less in evidence. Local changes in topography due to the shifting of drainage channels have led to the growth of three separate cities at various periods, and so within the Baghdad region there has arisen first Babylon, the ancient capital that lay closer to the Euphrates, some 60 miles to the south of modern Baghdad. Babylon was in turn succeeded by Ctesiphon, only a few miles from Baghdad, and this city remained the nodal centre until superseded by Baghdad in the early Muhammadan era. Baghdad itself dates only from the 8th century A.D., and a 'golden age' occurred when its Abbasid rulers supplanted the Omeyyads of Damascus and made it the capital of the Moslem world. Baghdad suffered greatly from Mongol invasion, and most of the older buildings have disappeared. The modern city is sprawling and undistinguished—in fact, an extreme disappointment to visitors who may wish to evoke the 'Arabian Nights'. Many of the poorer houses are of mud, and flooding is a frequent feature (Fig. 65).

Baghdad is the commercial centre of the region, with numerous, but small workshops and distributing houses. Industry is, as we have seen, mainly confined to bazaar crafts—textiles, metals, foodstuffs—and to the production of pottery and building materials. Trade is for the most part in the hands of Europeans, Jews, and Armenians, with Iraqi Christians as clerks and supervisors. An upper class—mainly Sunni Moslems—carries on the administration of the country; and a third element in the life of the city is a large group of absentee landlords.

65:Landshut S-4 (no date)1950 M1 Middle East
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CHAPTER III

IRAQ

563 An examination of the development of Muslim-Jewish relations in Iraq reveals two noteworthy features, apparently at variance with each other. On the one hand, probably in no other Muslim country has the Jewish minority been so closely associated with the whole fabric of social and political life as in Iraq. On the other hand, in none has anti-Jewish feeling in recent years been so general and nowhere have anti-Jewish measures been applied so systematically.

The Jews in Iraq constitute, as far as we know, the oldest Jewish settlement outside Palestine. Indeed, even if the origin of the House of Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees is disregarded, Jewish settlements in Iraq can be said to have first taken place about 600 years before Jews from Palestine emigrated to Egypt. The majority of the Jews now living in Iraq are the direct descendants of those Jews who, after the destruction of the First Temple 2,500 years ago, were led into exile in Babylonia and remained there after the return of some of their number to Jerusalem with Ezra.

But the great antiquity of the Jewish community is not, of course, the sole reason for the exceptionally close bonds which unite Iraqi Jews to their country and their non-Jewish neighbours. "They have made themselves an integral part of the nation. Both in business and in politics they have always played a big part." (E. Main: *Iraq*, 1935.)

Their close association with all aspects of the life around them is in part due to the fact that the proportion of the Jewish minority in Iraq to the rest of the population is far higher than in other Muslim [162] countries. Whereas the Jews in Egypt represent only 0.4 per cent of the total population, in Iraq they amount to about 2.5 per cent, and as much as 25 per cent in the capital, Baghdad.

It should be noted that it is more difficult to determine the total number of Jews in Iraq than in Egypt. For while in Egypt the Jewish population is almost exclusively concentrated in the big towns, in Iraq it is dispersed up and down the country, including some scattered among the Kurdish tribes in the North.

563 The Kurdish Jews live somewhat apart from the rest of the Jewish [197] community, just as the Kurdish minority lives apart from the Arab 162 population. Both are different from the Arabs in general character and daily habits. The language of some of the Kurdish Jews is Syriac (a form of Aramaic), while those in Mosul speak Kurdish. They are ● [463] mainly traders and craftsmen and live scattered among the various Kurdish villages and towns. In the Amadia district, however, there can be found a number of Jews engaged in tilling the land. It is

65:Landshut S-4 (no date)1950 M1 Middle East
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563 services in the building up of its administration. From the establishment of the new country, the Jewish community, and especially its leading members, have been as much bound up with its development as their Muslim neighbours.

Hezkiel Sassoon was appointed Minister of Finance and continued to hold this office in several successive Cabinets. A Jew, David Jamra, was appointed Vice-President of the Court of Appeal. Other Jews occupied important posts in various departments, particularly those concerned with the administration of ports, railways, and finance.

The large number of Jewish officials in the public service was due to the fact that the sudden demand for officials and clerks could only be satisfied in the main from the Jewish and Christian minorities, with their higher educational standards. During the period of the Mandate (*i.e.*, until 1932), and even in the first years of Iraq's existence as an independent State, the high proportion of Jews in Government service caused no offence. Their talents and skill in office work were most valuable to a Government seeking to prove Iraq's readiness for independence.

563 463 The Jewish communities in Baghdad and Basra are among the wealthiest in the entire Middle East. The names of some of the leading families, such as the Sassoons and the Khadooris, are known even in other countries. There also exists a large middle-class of small bankers, retailers, agents, merchants, civil servants, clerks, and physicians and lawyers, together with other members of the liberal professions. There are—among the poorer elements—many small shopkeepers, and likewise many craftsmen of one sort or another—masons, carpenters; and also domestic servants. There is no special Jewish quarter in Baghdad, Jews being found in all parts of the town, though they do tend to congregate in certain streets of different quarters.

563 The community is well organised. In Baghdad it has established a great number of welfare and social services, a hospital, and about 25 schools. By 1930, 7,200 pupils were attending the ten schools under *Alliance* administration. Thanks to these services, the state of health and the general standard of education of the Jews are far above the average level in Iraq. Ninety per cent of the candidates from Iraq for the London matriculation examination, for instance, used to be Jews.

The community is governed by a lay council of 60 members, who are entitled to impose certain taxes (*e.g.*, on meat) and to allocate the necessary funds to the various institutions. These funds have made it possible to admit pupils to elementary schools free of charge.

There is also a religious council, under the Chief Rabbi, Haham Benjamin, which maintains the communal courts dealing with all such matters as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and the like. Until his resignation at the end of 1949 the overall Head of the community was the universally respected Haham Sasson Khadoori.

[642] This partial communal autonomy arises from Article No. 79 of the Constitution of Iraq. The internal organisation of the Jewish

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in 1935, the Agricultural and Industrial Bank was founded. Little progress was achieved before the outbreak of the Second World War, and during the war the difficulty of importing equipment prevented expansion. However, after 1942, industrial investment began to increase, the total amount from 1943 to 1948 being ID 3,089,000. 1/ Between 1948/49 and 1951/52, the capital invested in the principal industries, other than petroleum, increased from about ID 312 million to ID 4.4 million, the value of production from 1.4 million to ID 3.6 million, and the number employed from 1,649 to 3,837. 2/ Since then, there has been substantial development. In 1954 it was estimated that there were some 70,000 to 80,000 persons engaged in manufacturing. Of these, somewhat less than half were handicraftsmen; some 13,000 were employed in the petroleum industry; 10,000 to 15,000 in the textile and leather industries; about 6,000 in the building materials industry; about 4,500 in the food and beverages industries; and some 3,000 to 4,000 in the tobacco industry. 3/

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Manufacturing is concentrated around Baghdad, which accounts for about 70 per cent of total factory employment. In 1954, a check on firms in Baghdad showed that, of a total of 31,600 workers, 6,700 were in firms with over 1,000 employees; 3,800 were in firms with 500 to 999 employees; 2,000 were in the 250-499 group; 4,300 were in the 100-249 group; 3,000 were in the 20-99 group; 1,500 were in the 10-19 group; and 10,200 worked in firms employing 9 persons or less. 4/

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Recent surveys have indicated that Iraq may contain appreciable quantities of iron ore, copper, sulphur and sulphur compounds, gypsum, bitumen, dolomite, calcite and different varieties of marble. 5/ However, up to the present, little use has been made of these minerals, and the most important industries are those based on agricultural materials, namely: spinning and weaving of cotton and woollen textiles; rayon weaving; jute spinning and weaving; soap-making (about 7,500 tons); vegetable oils; tanning; tobacco products; beer (1,840,000 litres); alcohol (318,000 litres) and alcoholic drinks (1,560,000 litres). The recently founded cement industry produces about 200,000 tons a year. Consumption of electricity increased from 47 million kilowatt-hours in 1946 to 82 million in 1949 and 272 million in 1953. The amount used in manufacturing increased from 20 million kilowatt-hours in 1946 to 35 million in 1949 and 159 million in 1953. 6/

1/ Industrial Bank, First Annual Report (Baghdad, 1948) (in Arabic).

2/ Hassan Ahmad Salman, "Development of Industry in Modern Iraq", Amared, March 1954 (Baghdad).

3/ Carl Iverson, Monetary Policy in Iraq (Baghdad, 1954), page 71.

4/ The Iraq Times Annual, 1954 (Baghdad), page 54.

5/ Salman, loc. cit.

6/ These figures include electricity consumed at the oilfields, which increased from about 11 million kilowatt-hours in 1946 to about 21 million in 1949 and about 116 million in 1953; they exclude electricity consumed at pipeline stations, which amounted to 71 million kilowatt-hours in 1953 (Statistical Abstract).